

Top Health Benefits of Garlic

By Jeff K Andrews

The health benefits of garlic, or *Allium sativum* in botanical and scientific terms, are extensive and is one of nature's culinary and medicinal wonders. This root vegetable has palate-pleasing qualities similar to herbs that enhance the flavor of any dish. In addition, it has natural ingredients that provide a variety of health-related benefits and treatment applications.

Culinary Uses of Garlic. Garlic is now a staple vegetable in almost every kitchen. It is widely used in different cuisines as an ingredient and herb flavoring. The cloves are commonly used for cooking but other parts of the vegetable, including the flowers and immature bulb, are also used as a culinary ingredient. As a flavor enhancer, it is prepared and cooked with different types of meat, fish, and vegetables. In its uncooked form, the garlic may be added as an herb to certain sauces and condiments.

Medicinal and Health Benefits of Garlic. Garlic is said to produce a variety of medicinal and health benefits. This root vegetable is reputed to facilitate cardiovascular health due to its capacity to prevent hypertension, cholesterol, atherosclerosis, and other conditions. The component in the garlic which is responsible for this health benefit is allicin, a remarkable compound derived from alliin and allinase.

Aside from producing cardiovascular benefits, allicin is also said to have antibacterial, antimicrobial, and even antifungal properties. Allicin also promotes the development of certain types of antioxidants like glutathione and catalase. These two antioxidant enzymes are said to detoxify the body, boost the immune system, and prevent the risk of cancer and other diseases.

As a soluble compound, its potency is significantly reduced when cooked or exposed to the acids in the gastrointestinal system reducing the health benefits of garlic. To help maintain the optimum benefits of this compound and improve absorption into the body, it is often extracted from the garlic and processed into food supplements.

Aside from allicin, garlic has diallyl disulfide or DADS, a more stable compound that can survive high cooking temperatures. DADS is said to have anti-cancer and immune-boosting properties. Together with allicin, DADS



also improve cardiovascular health by promoting blood circulation and reducing cholesterol. As an anti-cancer compound, DADS is purported to facilitate decrease in growth of certain types of cancer cells.

Although a standard dosage for garlic has not yet been established, some recommend a daily intake of one or two raw cloves per day to achieve the optimum benefit of this root vegetable. However, the strong compounds in the garlic could have an adverse effect on the gastrointestinal area, especially when eaten raw. Taking garlic supplements is an alternative and safe way to fulfill this requirement. The best supplements usually contain all the essential compounds without the strong garlicky odor.

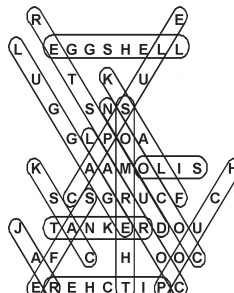
Risks and Warnings. There are individuals that are garlic-intolerant and experience allergic reactions upon consumption. The allergy symptoms may be moderate to severe, depending on the intake and the tolerance level of the individual. Stomachaches, heartburn, and even flatulence may occur as an allergic or digestive reaction to the garlic. Over-consumption of uncooked garlic also produces similar effects.

As a dietary supplement, less is known about its contraindicative properties if taken with other types of medication. Although, medical advise on appropriate dosage and intake is recommended for individuals planning to take garlic supplements while on anti-coagulation or any cardiovascular treatment medicines.

Exposure to crushed garlic juice may also cause skin irritation characterized by a slight burning sensation and reddening of the area. The level of discomfort and severity of the irritation depends on the individual's tolerance to the substance. In some moderate to severe cases, burning and blistering of the skin happens as a result of prolonged exposure to the garlic juice.

About the Author: There are many common foods that are beneficial for health. For more on the health benefits of carrots or how almond benefits your diet visit thehealthbenefitsof.com.

BRAIN GAMES ANSWERS



- Differences:**
1. Number is different
 2. Apron is shorter
 3. Mat is missing
 4. Shade is raised
 5. Scarf is shorter
 6. Birdhouse is missing